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Current Support Brief

REORGANIZATION OF AGRICULTURAL INSTITUTIONS IN RUMANIA



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REORGANIZATION OF AGRICULTURAL INSTITUTIONS IN RUMANIA

A reorganization of the administration of Rumanian agriculture in April 1962 climaxed the completion of collectivization in the countryside and allegedly provided the regime with the control necessary to spur stagnating agricultural production and to consolidate and develop further collective farms. In the Rumanian reorganization, which probably was inspired by a recent Soviet reorganization of agriculture, the Rumanian Ministry of Agriculture was replaced by a Higher Agricultural Council (HAC), and the work of the research institutes and experimental stations was centralized under the Central Institute of Agricultural Research. Besides streamlining the government apparatus for directing the operation of the large collective farms, the reorganization appears to have strengthened the regime's direct links with producing and supporting organizations.

On 13 April 1962 the Ministry of Agriculture was abolished in Rumania as the first step in reorganizing the administration of agriculture to fit the demands of an "essentially" socialized agriculture (now encompassing 96 percent of all arable land). 1/ The existing structure, according to Party boss Gheorghiu-Dej, was not applicable to a socialized agriculture, for it contained elements associated with private ownership of land. 2/ In place of the Ministry of Agriculture there was established on 27 April the HAC -- an organ of the Council of Ministers -- consisting of 983 members employed in agriculture as agronomists, specialists in animal husbandry, directors of machine tractor stations (MTS's) and state farms, collective farm chairmen, and research scientists. 3/ From these members an executive committee consisting of 17 persons was appointed by the Council of Ministers to carry out the work of the HAC between regular sessions. 4/ The chairman of the executive committee, who also will be the president of the HAC, probably will be a member of both the Central Committee of the Rumanian Communist Party and the Council of Ministers, as in the case of Mihai Dalea, recently appointed to this position. 5/

The function of the HAC is to analyze the over-all development of agriculture and to issue directives and instructions to the Regional Peoples Councils. Specialization within the HAC will correspond with the principal branches and problems of agriculture -- land use, grain and industrial crops, horticulture and viticulture, animal husbandry, mecha-

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nization of agriculture, training and propaganda, and state farms. Attached to the HAC are two special committees, one for coordinating and drafting plans for the development of agriculture and the other for dealing with economic problems in agriculture. 6/

The HAC will administer agriculture through a network of Regional and District Agricultural Councils as shown in the accompanying chart. These subordinate units, each consisting of 200 to 250 members, are responsible to their respective Peoples Councils for the management of agriculture. Except for the committees on plans and economic problems, the structural set-up in the Regional and District Agricultural Councils is identical with that of the HAC. Between plenary sessions of the councils (national, regional, and district), approximately 20,000 council members will be working at collectives, state farms, MTS's, or experimental stations. 7/ This number represents, at least in principle, a far wider participation in planning and execution of plans by people at the working level than in the past and provides a more direct channel for orders from above or for complaints from below. It also should allow for local solutions to local problems when possible and should eliminate to some extent the red tape of administrative clearances.

Along with the establishment of the HAC a Central Institute of Agricultural Research was established to do research in problem areas of agriculture and to create a more centralized leadership of research activity. 8/

The reorganization of agriculture and the streamlining of agricultural research released many trained agricultural specialists from desk jobs. These released specialists were assigned immediately to the collectives and state farms. According to the reassignment plan, involving at least 76 percent of all agricultural specialists, a minimum of five specialists was assigned to each state farm, and at least one was assigned to every collective farm. One veterinarian was available to serve three to four collective farms. All specialists transferred to the countryside will be paid according to the scale of their previous employment, including holidays and state allocations for children. 9/

With this reorganization, Rumania becomes the first European Satellite to abolish the traditional Ministry of Agriculture and to emulate essentially the current

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Soviet patterns for the management of agriculture.* The reorganization represents another effort to raise the efficiency of collective farms. The reassigning of agricultural specialists from desk jobs to farms has been unsuccessfully attempted by other European Satellites in recent years. Agricultural specialists have been reluctant to return to small villages with poor housing and no cultural benefits. Moreover, the expected benefits in terms of improved agricultural production have failed to materialize because of local hostility and the apathy of farmers. Consequently, there is little reason to believe that the implementation of this measure in Rumania will proceed smoothly during the next few years.

Because the type of agricultural management being introduced into Rumania is new in the Soviet Bloc, there is little basis for prejudging its success or failure. The HAC must quickly undertake the formidable task of organizing the newly formed collective farms into effective working organizations in order to avoid a reduction in agricultural production, which occurred in East Germany and Hungary following intensive collectivization drives. Under present methods of farming in Rumania the peasant's attitude of indifference toward work on the collective farms will be an important factor in determining the level of agricultural output for the next several years. In no way does this reorganization have a favorable influence on peasant incentives.

*In the USSR the Ministry of Agriculture was retained but was divested of most of its authority. The Ministry, however, was made responsible for Soviet agricultural research activities.

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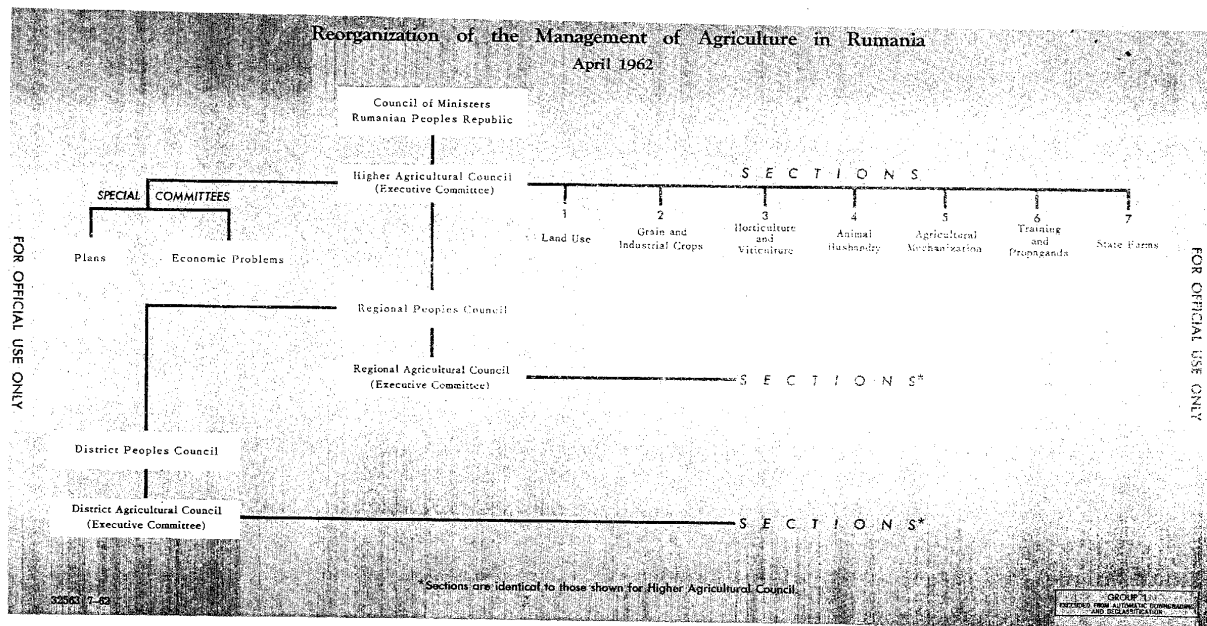
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